

Message Text

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64

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-15 MCT-01 AID-05 /098 W
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R 062143Z OCT 76

FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3419

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL BELIZE

USUN NEW YORK 592

UNCLAS GUATEMALA 6973

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: GT UK BH PROP PBOR

SUBJECT: BELIZE IN THE PRESS

REF: GUATEMALA 6874

1. SUMMARY: GUATEMALAN PRESS CARRYING STORIES, CONFIRMED BY ACTING FONMIN, THAT GUATEMALAN CONSULATE IN BELIZE WAS STONED BY DEMONSTRATORS. ONE PAPER ALSO CARRIED "LONDON OBSERVER" STORY REGARDING POSSIBILITY OF GUATEMALAN INVASION OF BELIZE.

2. AFTERNOON JOURNAL "LA TARDE" OCTOBER 4 FRONT PAGED SPANISH WIRE SERVICE STORY FROM LONDON ON ITEM IN "LONDON OBSERVER" OCTOBER 4. "LA TARDE" STORY HEADLINED "THE OBSERVER": WAR OF NERVES OVER BELIZE -- A BATTALION OF QUEEN'S OWN HIGHLANDERS WITH AIR SUPPORT AWAIT INVASION OF AREA".

3. FOLLOWING ARE PRINCIPAL POINTS OF "OBSERVER" STORY:

A. GUATEMALA HAS INITIATED WAR OF NERVES ON SUSPICION THAT DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS TO OBTAIN SOVEREIGNTY OVER BELIZE COULD FAIL.

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B. SPEECH GIVEN BY PRESIDENT LAUGERUD SEPTEMBER 30 AT

TOWN ON BELIZE BORDER WAS "INFLAMMATORY" (REFTEL).
C. ALTHOUGH GUATEMALA DOES NOT HAVE A VERY GREAT
MILITARY POTENTIAL BELIZE DOES NOT UNDERESTIMATE
POSSIBILITY OF GUATEMALAN INVASTION. GUATEMALA DOES
HAVE, "OBSERVER" ADDS, NEW ISRAELI AIRCRAFT THAT
CAN CARRY PARACHUTISTS AND THEIR ARMY IS PREPARED
FOR GUERRILLA WARFARE THANKS TO TRAINING
"PROVIDED BY UNITED STATES RANGERS."
D. IF AN ATTACK DOES OCCUR, THE BRITISH GARRISON COULD
ONLY HOPE TO HOLD ITS POSITION UNTIL REINFORCEMENTS
ARRIVE.
E. UK WANTS BELIZE TO BE INDEPENDENT AS SOON AS
POSSIBLE BUT IT DOES NOT WANT TO GIVE DEFENSE
GUARANTEES PRIME MINISTER PRICE WANTS.

4. SOMEWHAT SURPRISINGLY STORY HAS NOT YET BEEN PICKED
UP BY ANY OTHER NEWSPAPER. HOWEVER, ALL ARE CARRYING
REPORTS THAT GUATEMALAN CONSULATE IN BELIZE WAS STONED
OCTOBER 1NFOLLOWING A DEMONSTRATION BY SOME 200 PEOPLE
ALLEGEDLY AGAINST LOCAL POLICIES OF PREMIER PRICE.
ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER OBIOLS IS QUOTED BY ONE PAPER
OCTOBER 5
AS SAYING, "(AS OF) YESTERDAY AFTERNOON THE OFFICIAL
REPORT FROM GUATEMALAN CONSUL IN BELIZE HAD STILL NOT
BEEN RECEIVED TO KNOW EXACTLY EXTENT OF DAMAGE
SUSTAINED, BUT IT IS KNOWN THAT THERE WAS A STONING
BECAUSE OF WHICH A STRONG PROTEST WILL BE RAISED
BEFORE THE BRITISH AUTHORITIES."
ANDREWS

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